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SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES

THE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY - PREVENTION OF THE VIOLENT DISINTEGRATION OF STATES

MACROECONOMIC POLICY QUESTIONS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Letter dated 26 January 1998 from the Permanent Representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a joint statement by the heads of State of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, made on 5 January 1998 in Ashgabat (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the items entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", "The maintenance of international security - prevention of the violent disintegration of States", "Macroeconomic

policy questions" and "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation".

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ANNEX

Joint statement by the heads of State of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, made on 5 January 1998 in Ashgabat

On 5 January 1998, the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan held a meeting in Ashgabat.

Presidents Nursultan Nazarbaev, Askar Akayev, Emomali Rakhmonov and Islam Karimov extended their good wishes to President Saparmurat Niyazov in connection with his recovery from an illness, expressed their support and wished him success in his work for the good of the people of Turkmenistan.

During the meeting, which took place in a spirit of mutual understanding, friendship and good-neighbourliness, the Presidents exchanged views on the current state of, and prospects for developing, relations among the countries of the region, broadening and deepening cooperation in the most important areas of economic and social and cultural life, and on a wide range of issues relating to international and regional policies of mutual interest.

In particular, the leaders of the five States noted their States' enormous historical potential and common historical roots, the interrelatedness of their destinies, their traditions of friendship, the similarity of their cultures, customs and mores, and the stability of their good-neighbourly relations. On the eve of the twenty-first century and the third millennium, the leaders of the five States were unanimous in their view that the most pressing need was to protect the region from political crises and conflicts, and to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence and constructive partnership on an equal footing for the good of one and all.

With respect to the outcome of the meeting, the sides,

Considering the need to consolidate the independence of their States, improve the well-being of their peoples, develop their national economies and make the most effective use of their geopolitical situation and natural-resources potential;

Bearing in mind the similarity of their goals and objectives with respect to the independent development of their countries, consolidation of their statehood, and their international recognition as full subjects of international law;

Reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, desiring to deepen the ties among their countries and peoples on the basis of the principles of respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, equality, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, rejection of the use of force or threat of force and rejection of economic or any other means of exerting pressure, conscientious fulfilment of their obligations, and compliance with the universally recognized norms of international law,

Stated the following:

1. The sides are unanimous in their determination to consolidate their political and economic independence through the extensive development of international bilateral and multilateral ties, regional cooperation and mutual support in diverse international organizations and forums.

2. The sides reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to deepening friendly, equitable and mutually advantageous relations based on a long-term partnership and consistent with the national interests of all five States, and to security and stability in the region.

3. The sides agreed that the Commonwealth of Independent States is an acceptable model for bilateral and multilateral cooperation among States in transition. At the same time, it was necessary to bear in mind that the form of participation in the Commonwealth must be determined by each State independently in the light of its development priorities and its international obligations.

4. The sides confirmed the need to implement the Ashgabat Declaration of the Economic Cooperation Organization with respect to the creation of a pipeline infrastructure and transport and communications systems in the region.

They noted the importance of the Treaty between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on the creation of a single economic area within the framework of regional integration.

5. The sides emphasized the need to increase the exploitation and output of their countries' rich natural resources, particularly natural gas and oil, and take urgent measures to implement joint projects to lay pipelines and construct electric power lines to transport sources of energy to world markets.

6. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the process of settling the situation in Tajikistan and noted that the normalization of the situation in that country was important for the entire region. They expressed their readiness to contribute in every way possible to the achievement of reconciliation and accord in Tajikistan through the creation of democratic and secular State based on the rule of law.

7. The sides were unanimous in their view that the establishment of peace and accord in Afghanistan was possible only through negotiations between the opposing groups with the active assistance of all interested parties. They reaffirmed their readiness to continue their joint efforts to settle the situation in Afghanistan under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of neighbouring countries, the Russian Federation and the United States of America and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The sides unanimously noted the usefulness and timeliness of the Ashgabat meeting, which helped strengthen mutual understanding and confidence, and clarify positions on key issues concerning relations among the five fraternal countries.

President Saparmurat Niyazov expressed his thanks to the leaders of the four fraternal neighbouring States for their attention, good wishes and friendly support.

Presidents Nazarbaev, Akayev, Rakhmonov and Karimov thanked President Niyazov for his hospitality and warm welcome.